3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

mer unbarbed and securely fastened to the shaft, the latter barbed and loosely attached. 411

The lances were two-edged points fastened to a shaft of ash wood, some six or eight feet long, ornamented with tufts of eagle plumes. The knives were at first of stone, but were soon replaced by the European steel ones. The tomahawks were of several sorts and are all duplicated among those of the other Sioux tribes. The shield was an important part of a man's equipment, it was of buffalo hide whitened with white clay and with a large painting of the owner's medicine on the front. The bow-lance was a purely ceremonial weapon and was passed down from father to son to be used in the dances. Maximilian describes it as a long bow with a spear point on one end, the whole decorated elaborately with eagle plumes and other ornaments. [428]

MANUFACTURES: — The beds of the Mandans were built up from four posts sunk in the earth to form a rectangle of suitable size, with poles lashed across from one to the other, about one foot above the ground. Over the cross poles a green buffalo hide was stretched and allowed to dry, thus forming a springy foundation; around the sides and across the top hides were also stretched, giving the whole bed the appearance of a large box. A small opening was left in one of the sides through which to enter, and the whole interior was piled with buffalo robes. These beds held several persons. 352

The Mandan boats, bull-boats they were called, also merit a description. They were circular, made over a frame of bent willows, which consisted of two hoops held in position by cross pieces; over the whole a raw buffalo hide was stretched, hair in, and sewed to the upper rim. They were about six feet in diameter and could carry very heavy loads. For a paddle a pole some five feet long was used. It was split up the end where a flat board about two and a half feet long was inserted and bound on. The boat was paddled from a standing position, and made half a revolution at every stroke. This same sort of boat was used by the Arikara and Hidatsa. 501 171

For the rest their material culture did not differ greatly from that of the surrounding nomadic tribes, only a brief enumeration therefore of the manufactures and utensils is necessary.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

342 height, are long rafters, inclining to the centre; they are placed near each other, and bear the roof. On the outside the huts are covered with a kind of mat, made of osiers, joined together with bark, and now the skeleton of the hut is finished. Over this hay is spread, and the outer covering 462 is of earth. The men and women work together in erecting these huts, and the relations, neighbours, and friends, assist them in the work. The building of the huts, manufacturing of their arms, hunting, and wars, and part of the labours of the harvest, are the occupations of the men; every other kind of work is left to the women, who, though in general well treated, are obliged to perform all the really laborious work. The women fetch fuel, in heavy loads, frequently from great distances, carry water, and, in winter, blocks of ice into the huts, cook, tan the skins, make 354 all the clothing, lay out the plantations, perform field labour, &c. &c. In the centre of the hut a circular place is dug for the fire, over which the kettle is suspended. This fire-place, or hearth, is often enclosed with a ledge of stones. The fuel is laid, in moderately thick pieces, on the external edge of the hearth, crossing each other in the middle, when it is kindled, and the pieces 352 gradually pushed in as they burn away. The Indians are not fond of large fires. The inmates sit round it, on low seats, made of peeled osiers, covered with buffalo or bear skin. Round the inner circumference of the hut lie or hang the baggage, the furniture, and other property, in leather bags, the painted parchment travelling bags, and the harness of the horses; and on separate stages there are arms, sledges, and snow-shoes, while meat and maize, piled up, complete the motley assemblage. (See Mr. Bodmer's drawing of the interior of the hut of Dipauch, Plate XIX.) The beds stand against the wall of the hut; they consist of a large square case, made of parchment or skins, with a square entrance, and are large enough to hold several persons, who lie very conveniently and warm on skins and blankets. (See the woodcut.)

342 In the winter huts they place, at the inside of the door, a high screen of willow boughs, 221 covered with hides, which keeps off the draught of air from without, and especially protects the 171 fire.

The summer huts are very cool, and, generally speaking, have no unpleasant smell. Mr. Say gives a very good description, and a tolerably accurate print, of a Konza lodge, or hut, and, with

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

361 342 the lodge. These floors or foundations are all perfectly circular, and varying in size in proportion to the number of inmates, or of the quality or standing of the families which are to occupy them. The superstructure is then produced, by arranging, inside of this circular excavation, firmly fixed in the ground and resting against the bank, a barrier or wall of timbers, some eight or nine inches in diameter, of equal height (about six feet) placed on end, and resting against each other, supported by a formidable embankment of earth raised against them outside; then, resting upon the tops of these timbers or piles, are others of equal size and equal in numbers, of twenty or twenty-five feet in length, resting firmly against each other, and sending their upper or smaller ends towards the centre and top of the lodge; rising at an angle of forty-five degrees to the apex or sky-light, which is about three or four feet in diameter, answering as a chimney and a sky-light at the same time. The roof of the lodge being thus formed, is supported by beams passing around the inner part of the lodge about the middle of these poles or timbers, and themselves upheld by four or five large posts passing down to the floor of the lodge. On the top of, and over the poles forming the roof, is placed a complete mat of willow-boughs, of half a foot or more in thickness, which protects the timbers from the dampness of the earth, with which the lodge is covered from bottom to top, to the depth of two or three feet; and then with a hard or tough clay, which is impervious to water, and which with long use becomes quite hard, and a lounging place for the whole family in pleasant weather—for sage— for wooing lovers—for dogs and all; an airing place—a look-out—a place for gossip and mirth—a seat for the solitary gaze and meditations of the stern warrior, who sits and contemplates the peaceful mirth and happiness that is breathed beneath him, fruits of his hard-fought battles, on fields of desperate combat with bristling Red Men.

342 353 [354] The floors of these dwellings are of earth, but so hardened by use, and swept so clean, and tracked by bare and moccassined feet, that they have almost a polish, and would scarcely soil the whitest linen. In the centre, and immediately under the sky-light (PLATE 46) is the fire-place—a hole of four or five feet in diameter, of a circular form, sunk a foot or more below the surface, and curbed around with stone. Over the fire-place, and suspended from the apex of diverging props or poles, is generally seen the pot or kettle, filled with buffalo meat; and around it are the family, reclining in all the most picturesque attitudes and groups, resting on their buffalo-robes [592] and beautiful mats of rushes. These cabins are so spacious, that they hold from twenty to forty persons—a family and all their connexions. They all 352 sleep on bedsteads similar in form to ours, but generally not quite so high; made of round poles rudely lashed together with thongs. A buffalo skin, fresh stripped from the animal, is stretched across the bottom poles, and about two feet from the floor; which, when it dries, becomes much contracted, and forms a perfect sacking-bottom. The fur side of this skin is placed uppermost, on which they lie with great comfort, with a buffalo-robe

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

folded up for a pillow, and others drawn over them instead of blankets. These beds, as far as I have seen them (and I have visited almost every lodge in the village), are uniformly screened with a covering of buffalo or elk skins, oftentimes beautifully dressed and placed over the upright poles or frame, like a suit of curtains; leaving a hole in front, sufficiently spacious for the occupant to pass in and out, to and from his or her bed. Some of these coverings or curtains are exceedingly beautiful, being cut tastefully into fringe, and handsomely ornamented with porcupine's quills and picture writings or hieroglyphics.

From the great number of inmates in these lodges, they are necessarily very spacious, and the number of beds considerable. It is no uncommon thing to see these lodges fifty feet in diameter inside (which is an immense room), with a row of these curtained beds extending quite around their sides, being some ten or twelve of them, placed four or five feet apart, and the space between them occupied by a large post, fixed quite firm in the ground, and six or seven feet high, with large wooden pegs or bolts in it, on which are hung and grouped, with a wild and startling taste, the arms and armour of the respective proprietor; consisting of his whitened shield, embossed and emblazoned with the figure of his protecting *medicine* (or mystery), his bow and quiver, his war-club or battle-axe, his dart or javelin—his tobacco pouch and pipe—his medicine-bag—and his eagle—ermine or raven head-dress; and over all, and on the top of the post (as if placed by some conjuror or Indian magician, to guard and protect the spell of wildness that reigns in this strange place), stands forth and in full relief the head and horns of a buffalo, which is, by a village regulation, owned and possessed by every man in the nation, and hung at the head of his bed, which he uses as a mask when called upon by the chiefs, to join in the buffalo-dance, of which I shall say more in a future epistle

This arrangement of beds, of arms, &c., combining the most vivid display and arrangement of colours, of furs, of trinkets—of barbed and glistening points and steel—of mysteries and hocus pocus, together with the sombre and smoked colour of the roof and sides of the lodge; and the wild, and rude and red—the graceful (though uncivil) conversational, garrulous, story-telling and happy, though ignorant and untutored groups, that are smoking their pipes—wooing their sweethearts, and embracing their little ones about their peaceful and endeared fire-sides; together with their pots and kettles, spoons, and other culinary articles of their own manufacture, around them; present altogether, one of the most picturesque scenes to the eye of a stranger, that can be possibly seen; and far more wild and vivid than could ever be imagined.

Reader, I said these people were garrulous, story-telling and happy; this is true, and literally so; and it belongs to me to establish the fact, and correct the error which seems to have gone forth to the world on this subject.

As I have before observed, there is no subject that I know of within the

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

plunge into and swim across the wildest streams and rivers, at times when they have no canoes or craft in which to cross them. I have as yet seen no tribe where this art is neglected. It is learned at a very early age by both sexes, and enables the strong and hardy muscles of the squaws to take their child upon the back, and successfully to pass any river that lies in their way.

The mode of swimming amongst the Mandans, as well as amongst most of the other tribes, is quite different from that practiced in those parts of the civilized world, which I have had the pleasure yet to visit. The Indian, instead of parting his hands simultaneously under the chin, and making the stroke outward, in a horizontal direction, causing thereby a serious strain upon the chest, throws his body alternately upon the left and the right side, raising one arm entirely above the water and reaching as far forward as he can, to dip it, whilst his whole weight and force are spent upon the one that is passing under him, and like a paddle propelling him along; whilst this arm is making a half circle, and is being raised out of the water behind him, the opposite arm is describing a similar arcl. in the air over his head, to be dipped in the water as far as he can reach before him, with the hand turned under, forming a sort of bucket, to act most effectively as it passes in its turn underneath him.

By this bold and powerful mode of swimming, which may want the grace that many would wish to see, I am quite sure, from the experience I have had, that much of the fatigue and strain upon the breast and spine are avoided, and that a man will preserve his strength and his breath much longer in this alternate and rolling motion, than he can in the usual mode of swimming, in the polished world.

In addition to the modes of bathing which I have above described, the Mandans have another, which is a much greater luxury, and often resorted to by the sick, but far more often by the well and sound, as a matter of luxury only, or perhaps for the purpose of hardening their limbs and preparing them for the thousand exposures and vicissitudes of life to which they are continually liable. I allude to their vapour baths, or *sudatories*, of which each village has several, and which seem to be a kind of public property—accessible to all, and resorted to by all, male and female, old and young, sick and well.

In every Mandan lodge is to be seen a crib or basket, much in the shape of a bathing-tub, curiously woven with willow boughs, and sufficiently large to receive any person of the family in a reclining or recumbent posture; which, when any one is to take a bath, is carried by the squaw to the sudatory for the purpose, and brought back to the wigwam again after it has been used

These sudatories are always near the village, above or below it, on the bank of the river. They are generally built of skins (in form of a Crow or Sioux lodge which I have before described), covered with buffalo skins

10: Neill H-4(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

574 609 chief gave our horses in charge of a young man, and told us we need not be uneasy as there would be good care taken of them.

574 262 On going into the hut, we found buffalo hides spread on the ground, before the fire, for us to sit upon, and soon after we were presented with two large dishes of boiled corn and beans, after which they gave us another large dish of boiled dried meat, but very few of us could eat of it, as it had too strong a taste and smell.[1]

231 342 After some other details which we omit, Harvey writes that when night came: "One young man brought in our horses, and put them in the same hut along with us, upon the right hand, on entering, and ourselves upon the left; a space was enclosed with a railing to keep them within bounds. This custom causes their habitations to have a very disagreeable and offensive smell. This precaution of theirs is to keep the horses from being stolen by the Assiniboines, or other enemies, who are frequently lurking about the village.

515 291 "Towards evening, having gone down to the river side, I observed the custom of washing themselves in the Missouri. Both men and women make it a rule, every morning and evening, to go down to the river, and wash for some time; the men make use of the clay to wash their hair, which answers the purpose of soap to take out the white and red earth with which they daub it, after having washed. Modesty in the female sex appears to be a virtue they are unacquainted with. They wear a kind of leather shift which reaches down to the calves of their legs. This they slip off some distance from the shore, and walk very deliberately into the water entirely naked, in the presence of old and young who seem not to pay any attention to them. * * * * * The men make use of no other covering, in the summer season, than these buffalo robes, and even these are seldom worn within doors, and only thrown on when they go out to visit or walk about the village. ●[352] Both sexes sleep naked. Their beds are raised about two feet from the ground, and hung around with dressed skins. In summer they seldom use any coverings at night, but lay like so many brutes."[2] * * * * * Mr. Henry gives a description of their lascivious dances which is too indelicate to publish. He writes under date of:

252 262 352 512 412 "Sunday, July 20th. At daybreak we were all up, and I took a walk down to the river, where I observed the same ceremony of washing as last evening, with as little reserve as before. Our host on our return presented us with some dried meat, and soon after a dish of corn and beans, but as it is not seasoned with any kind of grease or fat, after the first meal it has a very insipid taste. The corn is generally pounded or bruised in a wooden mortar, which is fixed fast and firm in the ground, in one corner of the hut, and this is the first work performed by the women in the morning.

[1] [Category 116, p. 325.-A] [2] [Category 116, p. 326.-A]

10: Neill H-1(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

342 angles, leaving open only a square space of about four feet on
[354] each side. This serves for chimney and windows, as they have no other opening to admit of light; and when it rains, even this is covered over with a canoe to prevent the rain from impairing their earthen pots. The whole of the roof is then well thatched with willows, to the thickness of six inches or more. Over the whole is laid about one foot of earth, and round the base to the height of three or four feet, and the thickness of three feet, which answers for security in case of an attack by the enemy, and keeps out the cold. The door is five feet broad and six high, provided with a covered way or porch on the outside, of the same height as the door, about seven feet broad and ten feet in length.

342 The doors are made of raw buffalo hide stretched upon a
352 frame and suspended by cords from the beam, which forms the circle. Every night the door is barricaded with a long piece of timber supported by two stout posts down in the ground, inside of the hut, one on each side of the door. As you enter the hut after passing through the porch and door, the first thing that strikes the view is a kind of triangular apartment on the left hand side of the door, and fronting the fire. This is for the purpose of fire-wood in the winter. This partition is constructed of square planks, about twelve feet high, and caulked to keep off the air from the door. Between the partition and the fire, there is commonly a distance of about five feet, which the master of the hut occupies during the day time, seated on a mat, constructed of small willows. * * * These mats are about ten feet long and four broad. The two ends for about two and a half feet are raised from the ground in a slanting position and each supported by a kind of sofa; over the mat is spread buffalo skins.

352 Some of these couches are raised about a foot above the
571 ground. Seated upon this a Mandan sits all day long and receives his friends, smokes and chats the time away, with the greatest dignity. He sometimes passes the night there also, when not inclined to lay with his wives.

INSIDE ARRANGEMENT OF HUTS.

352 On the left side of the host begins their range of beds. The
513 master and his favorite wife always occupy the first, and his other wives each a separate one in succession, next to those of the young people. All are constructed in the same manner, and joining to each other lengthways.

MEDICINE STAGE,

353 At the bottom of the hut fronting the Masters' seat, stands his medicine stage, and indeed it may be called his whole riches

[See Category 116, p. 331-40. A.]